

ACS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN CITIZENS SERVICES

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GREETINGS FROM THE ACS CHIEF

The summer is upon us and for those of you with children in international or U.S. Department of Defense schools they are finished or almost finished with the school year. Many of you plan to travel this summer, so please remember to take a few moments to make sure you and your family members have six or more months validity on your passports and have enough blank passport pages. If you find you need to renew your passport or add pages to it, please make an appointment with us (see item 4 below). Please remember that many of you may renew your passport or add pages by courier service without bothering to come to the Embassy. The requirements to renew your passport this way are found at the following link: http://seoul.usembassy.gov/acs_renewal_for_adult.html.



Please take a look at our "Question of the Month" in item 5 below. I may be preaching to the choir because those of you reading this are obviously signed up to receive our electronic messages, but if you haven't done so you should enroll in the State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). Our email message service is geared only for Americans living in and visiting Korea, but STEP is a worldwide program that took the place of the former registration system. By enrolling in STEP and keeping your travel profile updated, U.S. embassies and consulates in the countries where you vacation or travel will know how to get in touch with you in the event of an emergency or disaster.

Finally, this is my penultimate newsletter as ACS chief in Seoul; in a month I depart for my next assignment in Mexico. This has undoubtedly been the best job I've had so far in the Foreign Service, and it's largely because I've enjoyed meeting and working on behalf of the diverse and industrious U.S. citizen community here in Korea. Korea and Koreans want what Americans have to offer whether it's teaching English or at an international school, helping defend the Peninsula as a member of U.S. Force Korea, or as a business person or entrepreneur.

Enjoy the warmth of the early summer!

Robert (Buck) Waldrop

HOLIDAY CLOSURES

The Embassy will be closed on the following day:

June 6: (Wednesday) Hyun Choong Il (Korean Memorial Day)

The ACS Unit will be closed for routine services, including passport processing, on June 6. Please plan ahead, and enjoy the holidays!

Please be advised that the days just before and after a holiday are usually busier in the American Citizen Services Unit of the Embassy with all appointments taken. Do not be surprised at a longer wait for consular services on those days.

CONSULAR SERVICES OUTREACH OUTSIDE OF SEOUL

Stay tuned for more information about Consular Services outreach in areas outside of Seoul! More information will be provided in future messages and on the Embassy website.

ALL APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

The ACS Unit began requiring appointments for all non-emergency, routine services on June 15, 2011. This is also a worldwide policy for all U.S. embassies and consulates. Routine services include passport and additional pages applications, requests for Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, Social Security card and benefit applications, and notarial services.

Requiring appointments for all our non-emergency, routine services means that we'll be able to serve everyone more quickly and efficiently -- it will lessen considerably the long lines and busy waiting room that we often had during non-appointment sessions. Of course, we'll always take care of U.S. citizens with emergencies whether they have an appointment or not. Please note that notarial services are not considered emergency appointments.

A: All renewal applicants age 15 and younger must appear in person with both parents at the Embassy to renew their passports. The application must be signed before a U.S. consular officer.

U.S. regulations require the consent of both parents/legal guardians for the issuance of a U.S. passport to a minor child. If only one parent submits the application for a minor child, the absent parent is required to complete a notarized Parental Statement of Consent Form DS-3053 to legally consent to the issuance of the new passport. All sections of the parental consent form must be completely filled out including the notary office information and the type of ID used for the notary process. The parent submitting the application materials to the U.S. Embassy must bring the notarized consent form along with a copy of the absent parent's ID used during the notary.

Question of the month: Q: Question of the Month: What is the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, and why should I join?

It's the summer travel season so get in STEP today! When you sign up for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (formerly known as "Travel Registration" or "Registration with Embassies"), you will automatically receive the most current information we compile about the country where you will be traveling or living. You will also receive updates, including Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts (where appropriate). You only need to sign up once, and then you can add and delete trips from your account based on your current travel plans!

U.S. embassies and consulates assist nearly 200,000 Americans each year who are victims of crime, accident, or illness, or whose family and friends need to contact them in an emergency. When an emergency happens, or if natural disaster, terrorism, or civil unrest strikes during your foreign travels, the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate can be your source of assistance and information. By informing us about your trip or residence abroad, you help the embassy or consulate locate you when you might need them the most. Signing up is voluntary and costs nothing, but it should be a big part of your travel planning and security.

To sign up, go to <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>. You will create an account by clicking on the "Create an Account" link and following the instructions provided. This allows you to select a username and password so that you can access your travel data at any time. The account will also contain your personal information so that it can be saved and used again whenever you travel abroad. The personal information section includes basic information about you, and also an emergency contact that is not traveling with you. Once you have created an account, you can view your profile and add trips or overseas residences to sign up with a specific U.S. embassy or consulate. Click on the "Add Trip" button or "Add Overseas Residence" buttons to add this information. Follow through the pages, and complete as much information as you have available. There are very few required fields, but thorough information enables us to help you more efficiently. You will receive a confirmation email to ensure that you are signed up correctly.

This name change will not affect our service. If you have previously registered online with the U.S. Department of State, you will notice that the change of the name to the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program will not affect your ability to continue to utilize the service, nor will it affect your previous data.

Enroll today, and become a Smart Traveler! Again, to sign up and find more information go to <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>.

LIFE IN KOREA 101, THURSDAY JUNE 14TH: A CHANCE TO ASK ANY QUESTIONS YOU WANT TO ASK ABOUT LIVING IN KOREA!

Join us for a useful information session and Q & A at the American Center located in the Embassy Annex building on Thursday, June 14th beginning at 11:00 am and lasting until 12:00 noon. This is an excellent opportunity to ask two Foreign Service Officers any questions you have about living in Korea, and receive some insights from a licensed therapist about cultural differences.

Again, this will take place at the American Center which also has valuable resources for Americans living in Korea.

Please find a map and address at the link below. Feel free to email any questions about the event, or any questions you wish to have answered but would rather not ask in person to Seoul_ACS@state.gov at your convenience.

Please also RSVP to the Seoul_ACS@state.gov address if you are planning to come so we can prepare light refreshments.

Address: #10 Namyoung-dong, Yongsan-Ku, Seoul, Korea

http://seoul.usembassy.gov/ack_hours.html

CAUTION IN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICTS

Itaewon and Shinchon are well known entertainment districts in Seoul that are also considered a higher-risk area for crime. Please use caution in all entertainment and nightlife districts throughout Korea.

Recently a small number of incidents involving U.S. citizens in these areas have included physical and sexual assaults, theft of purses, wallets, and drugs allegedly slipped into drinks.

VOTING

For enquiries about voting or registering to vote online, please visit <http://www.fvap.gov/>. Stay tuned for additional details about voting in our upcoming newsletters. Stay tuned for more information regarding a voting outreach at the end of June.

USA PAVILION AT YEOSU EXPO 2012

Please visit the following website of the USA Pavilion 2012, the organization charged with designing, building and operating the USA Pavilion <http://www.pavilion2012.org/> for this summer's World Expo in Yeosu, South Korea.

Find a useful Embassy Fact Sheet for the Expo at this link:

http://seoul.usembassy.gov/p_rok_expo_042512.html

The USA Pavilion unifying themes of Diversity, Wonder and Solutions will tie into the overall Expo theme of "The Living Ocean and Coast" and will explore the vital connection between the health and well-being of cultures and communities and the future of one of our most important resources: the ocean. Through a host of exciting technologies and immersive storytelling, the 13,312-square foot USA Pavilion will highlight the diverse and dynamic nature of America's ocean and coastal environments as well as the colorful mosaic of American life. The USA Pavilion will include the following design and programming features:

A main attraction of stunning images, music and film will be projected in dazzling clarity across a 70-foot wide screen. Created around the concept of "This is My Ocean," individual voices and stories will unfold during the presentation to convey the diverse beauty of the American coastline and the many personal types of connections Americans enjoy with the vast ocean.

A large screen composed entirely of water will amaze guests when they enter the USA Pavilion.

40 American student "ambassadors" from universities and colleges around the United States will serve as guides throughout the USA Pavilion experience.

FIFTY STATES IN FIFTY DAYS CAMPAIGN: AMERICA THE UNEXPECTED

On January 19, 2012, President Obama signed an Executive Order and announced new administrative initiatives to significantly increase travel and tourism in and to the United States. In support of the President's National Tourism Strategy, the "Fifty States in Fifty Days" global campaign has a primary goal of driving traffic to the new Brand USA site, www.DiscoverAmerica.com, the first nationally coordinated program marketing U.S. tourism directly to foreign audiences.

Fifty States in Fifty Days will launch June 1, showcasing Delaware, the first state admitted to the Union. Subsequent days will feature the states in the order in which they joined the union. On July 4, the campaign will feature the District of Columbia, including the fireworks on the National Mall. Content will focus on national parks and popular attractions, as well as off-the-beaten-path destinations in each of the 50 states - combining images with fun facts and useful information for prospective visitors. Please check out the Brand USA website.

TRAVEL WARNINGS

The U.S. Department of State has recently issued travel warnings or travel alerts for the following countries and regions. If you are traveling to any of these regions in the near future, please consult travel.state.gov for more information.

Travel Warnings:

[Guinea](#) 11/04/2011
[Mauritania](#) 05/24/2012
[Saudi Arabia](#) 05/18/2012
[Lebanon](#) 05/08/2012
[Algeria](#) 05/04/2012
[Iran](#) 04/27/2012
[Cote d'Ivoire](#) 04/23/2012
[Burundi](#) 04/18/2012
[Eritrea](#) 04/18/2012
[Mali](#) 04/09/2012
[Niger](#) 04/06/2012
[Kenya](#) 04/04/2012
[Chad](#) 03/29/2012
[Yemen](#) 03/27/2012
[Israel, the West Bank and Gaza](#) 03/19/2012
[Syria](#) 03/06/2012
[Nigeria](#) 02/29/2012
[Colombia](#) 02/21/2012
[Mexico](#) 02/08/2012
[Pakistan](#) 02/02/2012
[Iraq](#) 01/19/2012
[Congo, Democratic Republic of the](#) 01/12/2012
[Sudan](#) 01/11/2012
[Philippines](#) 01/05/2012
[Central African Republic](#) 01/04/2012
[Republic of South Sudan](#) 12/22/2011
[Afghanistan](#) 12/01/2011

[Korea, Democratic People's Republic of](#) 11/03/2011
[Libya](#) 09/22/2011
[Somalia](#) 08/19/2011
[Haiti](#) 08/08/2011

Travel Alerts:

[Hurricane Typhoon Season 2012](#) 06/04/2012
[Bahrain](#) 04/25/2012
[Tunisia](#) 04/17/2012
[Guinea-Bissau](#) 04/13/2012
[Egypt](#) 03/29/2012

12/2011

Worldwide Caution January 31, 2011

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_4787.html

For additional information about these travel warnings and alerts, please go to this site:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

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- or -

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U.S. Embassy, Seoul
Unit #15550
APO AP 96205-5550

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Tel: 02-397-4114 (All other services)

Fax: 02-397-4080

DSN: 721-4114

English: <http://www.asktheconsul.org/>

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